1. **Describe the main indicators of social status of women in India.**

**Ans:** Women are a vital part of the Indian economy, constituting, one-third of the national labour force and a major contributor to the survival of the family.”

The poorer the family, the greater its dependence on women’s income. Despite progress in several key indicators, a gender analysis of most social and economic data demonstrates that women in India continue to be relatively disadvantaged in matters of survival, health, nutrition, literacy and productivity.

More than 90 percent of rural women in India are unskilled, restricting them to low paid occupations. Women generally have no control over land and other productive assets, which largely excludes them from access to institutional credit and renders them dependent on high cost informal sources of credit to secure capital for consumption and productive purposes.

2. **Discuss various efforts made for the empowerment of Scheduled Castes.**

**Ans:** The deep concern of the framers of the Constitution for the uplift of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes is reflected in the elaborate constitutional mechanism set up for their uplift.

- Article 17 abolishes Untouchability.
- Article 46 requires the State ‘to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.
- Article 335 provides that the claims of the members of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes shall be taken into consideration, consistently with the maintenance of efficiency of administration, in the making of appointments to services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or of a State.
- Article 15(4) refers to the special provisions for their advancement.
- Article 16(4A) speaks of “reservation in matters of promotion to any class or classes of posts in the services under the State in favour of SCs/STs, which are not adequately represented in the services under the State –
- Article 338 provides for a National Commission for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes with duties to investigate and monitor all matters relating to safeguards provided for them, to inquire into specific complaints and to participate and advise on the planning process of their socio-economic development etc.
- Article 330 and Article 332 of the Constitution respectively provide for reservation of seats in favour of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes in the House of the People and in the legislative assemblies of the States. Under Part IX relating to the Panchayats and Part IXA of the Constitution relating to the Municipalities, reservation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in local bodies has been envisaged and provided.

The Constitution of India has prescribed, protection and safeguards for the Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and other weaker sections; either specially or the way of insisting on their general rights as citizens; with the object of promoting their educational and economic interests and removing social disabilities. These social groups have also been provided institutionalized commitments through the statutory body, the National Commission of SCs. The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment is the nodal Ministry to oversee the interests of the Scheduled Castes.

**Initiatives taken for SC development**

**Educational Empowerment**